Pocahontas Co.

ALEXANDER MEMORIAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH - Stony Bottom

Organized 1894 --- Built 1894.

Sept. 27, 1940

Nelle Y. McLaughlin
Marlinton, W. Va.
Pocahontas County

Chapter 6 - Section 2

Alexander Memorial Presbyterian Church -

Stony Bottom.

As there was no Presbyterian organization west of the Greenbrier River and as there were twelve or fifteen members close around Driftwood or Stony Bottom as it was later called, it was deemed advisable to organize these members into a separate organization or church. Their membership was held at Liberty Church at Greenbank, Baxter Church at Dunmore, and Marlinton Church at Marlinton, from which points they were separated by such obstacles as to prevent almost wholly their attendance at the services of these churches.

Therefore the Presbytery of Greenbrier at its spring session which was held in Elk City, May 9-12, 1894 ordered its evangelist Rev. J. M. Sloan to visit the field during the summer with the view of organizing a church should the way be clear. Accordingly, he began a series of services in the school house on the night of August 6, 1894 and continued to preach with much power until the night of August 18, 1894.

On Friday night August 17, 1894 Driftwood Church was organized by Rev. J. M. Sloan assisted by Rev. B. F. Alexander with sixteen members enrolled. The following members were received by certificate from Baxter Church, Dunmore:

Mr. A. K. Dysard

Mrs. E. E. Dysard

Miss Bessie Dysard

Miss Claudia Dysard

Mrs. E. M. Meeks

Mrs. Cora Ray

Mrs. Hannah McLaughlin

Mrs. Nancy McCloud

Mrs. Mary Tallman

Mrs. Parthenia McLaughlin

The following persons were received from Liberty Church at Greenbank by certificate:

Mr. Allen Galford

Mrs. Nancy Galford

Mr. John H. Doyle was received from the Marlinton Presbyterian Church and Mrs. Mary Elisa Galford from the M. E. Church South. Mr. P. H. Meeks and Miss Blanche McLaughlin were received on profession of their faith in Christ.

These persons having entered into a covenant to walk together as an organized church on the principles and orders of the Presbyterian Church, then proceeded to elect officers. Mr. A. K. Dysard who was a ruling elder in the Dunmore church was unanimously chosen as elder and duly installed. Mr. J. H. Doyle was elected a deacon but his ordination and installation were postponed to a future date that he might have opportunity to acquaint himself with the requirements and duties of the office and the Confession of Faith.

should be Driftwood.

Judge James Warwick gave the church a choice of two locations for a church building. One location was on the hill where Mr. I. B. Bumgardner's house now stands, the other was up the road on Elk Lick Run where the present church stands. The church building was started about a year after the organization. Several years elapsed before the building was completed. The church records do not show in what year the building was dedicated but it was thought to be about August, 1901.

Rev. E. F. Alexander who was stated supply at the time of the organization died May 6, 1895 before the church was built. He is buried at Greenbank in the church yard at Liberty Church.

The dedicatory sermon was preached by the Rev. J. M. Sloan. Rev. Henry W. McLaughlin was then a seminary student supplying the church during the summer months.

On July 14, 1901 at a meeting of the session a motion was made to call a gongregational meeting for the fourth Sunday of August to ascertain the sentiment of the congregation as to changing the name of Driftwood Church to Alexander Memorial Church in memory of Rev. E. F. Alexander who was so active in promoting the organization and building of the church. The records do not show that the name was changed although in one instance it was spoken of as Alexander Memorial Chapel, after which it was called Driftwood.

In May 1931, the pastor Rev. J. T. Pharr called another congregational meeting and it was decided by a large vote to change the name to Alexander Memorial Church.

In May 1905 a congregational meeting was held for the purpose of electing a ruling elder and deacon, the elder Mr. A. K. Dysard having moved from the vicinity. Mr. John H. Doyle was elected elder and Mr. K. W. Meeks was elected deacon. Both officers were duly ordained and installed.

When Alexander Memorial Church was organized, it was grouped with the Presbyterian Churches at Dunmore and Greenbank. Several years later it was changed and grouped with Linwood and Mingo and in 1930 it was again changed and grouped with Cass.

For a number of years until 1930 mission points of the church were Clover Lick, Poage Lane and Thomas Spring school house on Clover Creek.

In August, 1929 Rev. O. N. Miles assisted by Rev. Fred W. Gray held a series of revival meetings. As a result of these services eighteen new members were added to the church. Three of these were adults and the rest were young people.

In April 1930, Rev. O. N. Miles who had been pastor for about twelve years moved to Marlinton to take over some new work. Alexander Memorial Church which had been grouped with the Linwood-Mingo field was now grouped with Cass, and the pastor from that church, Rev. James T. Pharr took over this work. Rev. Pharr has held a revival each year with the exception of one. The ministers assisting him have been:

Rev. J. D. Wilson of Scarbro, W. Va.

Rev. G. O. Yount of Huttonsville, W. Va.

Rev. A. N. Brown of Ronceverte, W. Va.

Rev. Marlin Curry of Lewisburg, W. Va.

Officers of the church:

Ministers and students:

Rev. E. F. Alexamder 1894 - 1895

Rev. H. W. McLaughlin, D.D. Student 1896 - 1900

" " " " pastor 1900 - 1904

Rev. R. E. Fultz - 1904 - 1906

Rev. W. W. Bain - 1907 - 1909

Rev. S. B. Hannah (student) date unknown

Rev. H. H. Leach " " "

Rev. W. P. Gibbs " until about 1916

Rev. W. P. Gibbs - pastor

W. J. Flint (student) 1917

Rev. O. N. Miles - pastor - 1918 - 1930

Rev. J. T. Pharr 1930 - to present

Ministers fron the Marlinton Presbyterian Church who preached at Alexander Memorial when that church was without a pastor were:

Rev. Wm. T. Price

Rev. G. W. Nickell

Rev. J. M. Walker

Elders:

Mr. A. K. Dysard 1894 - 1905

Mr. John Doyle 1905 - 1938

Mr. John H. Hevener 1905 - present

Deacons:

Mr. John Doyle 1894 - 1905

Mr. K. W. Meeks 1905 - present

Mr. Fred McLaughlin Present

Mr. Paul Hevener "

Mr. Otho Shields "

Trustees:

Mr. John R. Hevener

Mr. John Doyle

Mr. Guy Tallman

History of the church for the year 1936-1937

Pastor - Rev. James Timothy Pharr

The first important event in the history of this church during the year 1936 was the spring meeting of Presbytery which was held in the Huttonsville Church in April. Alexander Memorial was represented by Mr. John H. Doyle. At this meeting Presbytery was invited to meet at Stony Bottom for the fall meeting on Sept. 29. The members of the congregation soon began to plan as to what repairs should be made on the church building and lawn. The pastor presented the church with a check for fifty dollars to be used as the session desired for repairing and painting. It was decided that a part of the money should be used to buy paint and that the men of the congregation would apply it to the exterior. Lumber was purchased and the building underpinned. On several different

days the men hauled rocks and dirt and leveled off the lawn.

The Woman's Auxiliary had some money in the treasury to be used for the church. The amount was small so the ladies decided a new pulpit chair was needed most of all. After looking at catalogs of church furniture, it was discovered that there was not enough money to buy a chair. One of the members donated some nice oak and a carpenter in the community made a chair and communion table. Other minor repairs were made.

The last day of July the pastor commenced a ten day revival meeting. Several children were baptised and three joined the church.

During the month of May, the community had the pleasure of having with them Miss Margaret Pritchard, a medical missionary to Korea who gave a very interesting lecture about her work. On another occasion Rev. Ed Currie a missionary to China told of his work.

On the second Sunday in September, the Rev. Henry W. McLaughlin, D.D. preached at this church. On Sept. 29, Presbytery convened at 1:30 P.M. This was the first time such a meeting had ever been held at Stony Bottom. There was a good attendance of delegates and several guests. Rev. J. M. Bykenstricker, a missionary home on furlough from Brazil, was elected Moderator. Other guest speakers were: Dr. Blakely pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Staunton, Virginia and Rev. Currie from China. At this meeting Mr. J. H. Doyle was nominated as a delegate to General assembly which meets at Montreat, North Carolina.

History of the church 1937 - 1938

One of the ruling elders, Mr. J. H. Doyle, had the privilege of being one of the representatives of Greenbrier Presbytery, to the General Assembly which met at Montreat, North Carolina in May. On June 13, while the congregation was assembled for divine worship, Mr. Doyle gave a report of his attendance to the assembly.

On June 20, Mr. H. C. Erwin, an elder of the Salem Church, Organ Cave, West Virginia, who is chairman of the Presbytery's Committee on the Ministers' Annuity Fund, addressed the congregation upon this subject. The Session discussed the churche's quota of one hundred eighty-nine dollars and decided that it would be impossible to raise that large amount, so the quota was lowered to one hundred forty dollars. The Session appointed a committee to canvass the members and see how much money could be obtained. Members of the committee were: Mr. Doyle, Mr. Paul Nevener, Miss Mary Nevener. The result of the canvass was one hundred twenty-six dollars, obtained in pledges and cash. Seventy dollars and fifty cents being paid in cash.

At this session meeting the time for the revival meeting was discussed, and it was decided to begin this meeting on July 28, with Rev. O. C. Brown of Renick, West Virginia assisting the pastor, Rev. James T. Pharr. This meeting resulted in seventeen persons making a profession of faith.

On Oct. 28, 1938 the church and community sustained a real loss in the death of Mr. John Doyle, who was the last charter member of the church.

During January, 1939 Dr. T. Th. Stixrud, a medical missionary to Africa spoke in the church to the school children, and to the adults of the community. He told of some of his many interesting experiences in Africa as a physician. The foreign mission offering during January was ten dollars and five cents.

In 1938 there were eighty-one quarts of fruit canned and sent to the Davis Stuart School. Nearly every family took part in helping with this. The home mission offering was sixteen dollars.

Women's Auxiliary.

In February 1931, Mrs. J. T. Pharr and Mrs. D. M. Monroe, Presbyterial president, met with the ladies of the church for the purpose of organizing a women's Auxiliary. Miss Cornelia Pritchard was elected president, Mrs. I. B. Bumgardner, Vice-pres. Miss Mary Hevener, Secretary, and Mrs. D. L. Beverage, Treas. This was the first group of women ever to be organized at Stony Bottom for church work of any kind although in previous years the women had been active in their interest for the welfare of the church. They helped raise money to paint the church both inside and out. They collected money to buy a new Bible and new hymn books.

In 1934 the ladies of the church saved their Sunday eggs and bought hymn books for the church.

At this time there were twenty members in the Auxiliary, but only eight could be called active members of the Auxiliary. They were very generous in all of their benevolent gifts.

More interest was taken by the ladies during the year 1937-38. They filled one hundred quart jars with fruit, honey and vegetables for the Davis Stuart School. Ten dollars was given to the Ministers' Annuity Fund. The women saved their eggs on the Sunday preceeding Easter and gave the money for church repairs.

In Feb. 1939 the Auxiliary met at the home of Mrs. Shields for the purpose of electing officers. The following were elected:

President - Virginia Hevener
Sec. & Treas. - Mrs. Fred McLaughlin

McMillions

There is no record to show when the Sunday School was organized but there has been a Sunday School at Stony Bottom since before 1879. The first Sunday School was held in an old log school house which stood near where the road crosses Elk Lick Run right near the town of Stony Bottom. Mr. B. R. Doyle was the first Superintendent that anyone now living can remember. Mr. B. H. Barnett was Superintendent for about twenty years. Other Superintendents have been: W. R. Moore, J. R. Hevener, J. H. Doyle and Fred McLaughlin, the present superintendent. Teachers were: Mr. and Mrs. A. K. Dysard, W. R. Moore, and J. H. Doyle.

The teachers for 1935-36 were as follows:

John R. Hevener - Bible Class

Miss Mary Hevener - Senior girls

Paul Hevener - Senior boys

Miss Cornelia Pritchard - Intermediate

Miss Virginia Hevener - Juniors

Mrs. Fred McLaughlin - Primary

Owing to distance and bad roads the Sunday School was not continued through the winter months until about the year of 1915 when it became an "evergreen" Sunday School and has continued so until the present time.

In January, 1938 the members of the Sunday School voted to have Sunday School at two o'clock P. M. during the winter months, as this hour was more convenient for those who lived at a distance.

Information:

Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian Churches, Montreat, North Carolina

History of the Alexander Memorial Church - by Miss Virginia Hevener

The Church on the Western Waters - Courtney

Scotts 5.00

McMillions 2.00